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26 March 2014

Miss J Sanderson  
Headteacher  
Blackburn Primary School  
Baring Road  
Blackburn  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S61 2BU

Dear Miss Sanderson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Blackburn Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher; the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors; a representative of the local authority; and other members of the senior leadership team. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the inspection the deputy headteacher's employment has increased from three to four days each week. The literacy coordinator has stepped down from the role, which is now covered by the deputy headteacher. The numeracy coordinator has been given more leadership time and has additional responsibility for upper Key Stage 2. The Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body have resigned. A new Chair and two other governors have been appointed and a new vice-chair will be appointed shortly.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The headteacher has a detailed understanding of what is wrong in the school and is taking effective steps to make the necessary changes. The school's improvement plans clearly reflect the areas for improvement and have sufficiently clear success criteria to be able to hold staff to account. Senior leaders now check the quality of teaching and the progress

pupils are making more regularly. The headteacher has recognised the need to learn from other schools and has set up a number of links within the local area. Some effective partnerships are developing and teachers are taking opportunities to observe and work with outstanding teachers in other schools. In addition, the local authority is providing training for teachers and teaching assistants. However, senior leaders and governors are aware that the quality of teaching, and support from teaching assistants, is still inconsistent and needs to improve further.

Steps have been taken to increase the accuracy of assessment. Consequently, the data used by governors and senior leaders are more reliable. This means senior leaders are more able to pin-point those pupils making slower progress and provide them with additional support.

An external review of governance has been completed. The governing body has reconstituted and added some more experienced and knowledgeable members. Governing body committees are now better placed to check on the work of the school. Governors have received training on school performance data and have a better understanding of the challenges facing the school. They have begun to ask more probing questions of senior leaders. However, the Evaluation Group, which includes governors, a representative of the local authority and senior leaders, does not meet frequently enough to check on, and evaluate, pupil progress data and the impact of the school improvement plan.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers only after consultation with the lead Her Majesty's Inspector.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Strategic Director, Children & Young People's Services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

**Her Majesty's Inspector**